Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.   (Currently Amended)   A content information management apparatus comprising:

a collection processing unit which collects content information items indicating attributes of contents stored in different specific forms in storage devices connected to networks using different protocols;

a conversion processing unit which converts each of the content information items collected by the collection processing unit into content information of a standardized form; and

a display an output unit which displays outputs the content information of the standardized form converted by the conversion processing unit.

2.   (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 1, wherein the conversion processing unit includes a plurality of conversion processors which are provided according to types of the networks to be connected.

3.   (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 2, wherein said collection processing unit comprises a plurality of collection processors which collect said content information items from the storage devices connected to corresponding ones of the networks.

4.   (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 3, further comprising an information creating unit which creates information by unifying content information items of each standardized form output from each of the plurality of collection processors.

5.   (Currently Amended) A content information management method comprising:

collecting a content information item indicating an attribute of content stored in a first form in a first storage device connected to a network using a first protocol and a content

information item indicating an attribute of content stored in a second form in a second storage device connected to a network using a second protocol; and

~~displaying~~ <u>outputting</u> each of the collected content information items in a standardized form.

6.   (Original) The content information management method recording to claim 5, further comprising creating a play list based on the collected content information items and displaying the play list.

7.   (Original) The content information management method according to claim 6, further comprising sequentially reproducing and outputting individual content indicated on the display of the play list from a corresponding one of the storage devices.

8.   (Original) The content information management method according to claim 6, further comprising converting control information from a certain device into control information which is capable of being dealt with in the standardized form, and performing a process corresponding to the converted control information.

9.   (Original) A content information management apparatus in which a plurality of devices using different protocols are connected via networks, comprising:

an inquiry receiving unit which receives from an arbitrary one of the plurality of devices an inquiry relating to content information held in another one of the plurality of devices and returns a result of the inquiry; and

an inquiry processing unit which acquires content information items held in the plurality of devices based on inquiry protocols of the respective devices, converts the content information items into a standardized form and holds the converted content information, retrieves the converted content information according to the inquiry received by the inquiry receiving unit and returns a result which satisfies a condition to the inquiry receiving unit as an inquiry response.

10. (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the inquiry processing unit acquires an inquiry result by making an inquiry by use of an inquiry protocol of a targeted device via a network.

11. (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 9, wherein the inquiry processing unit creates a reproduction list of contents held in each device in a standardized form based on the converted content information and returns the reproduction list as an inquiry response to the inquiry receiving unit when receives from one of the plurality of devices a display request for a reproduction list of contents held in another ones of the plurality of devices.

12. (Original) The content information management apparatus according to claim 11, further comprising a reproducing unit which is capable of sequentially acquiring contents described in the reproduction list from the corresponding devices and output the acquired contents to the arbitrary one of the plurality of devices.

13. (Original) A content information management apparatus in which a first device and at least one second device which holds content information being not accessible from the first device are connected via networks, comprising:

a communicating unit capable of performing communication with the first device and the at least one second device,

an inquiry receiving unit which receives an inquiry relating to content information of the at least one second device from the first device via the communicating unit and returns a result of the inquiry; and

at least one inquiry processing unit which is provided for the at least one second device and processes the inquiry received by the inquiry receiving unit,

wherein the inquiry receiving unit selects one of the at least one inquiry processing unit according to the inquiry, leaves an inquiry process up to the selected inquiry processing unit, waits for a processing result of the selected inquiry processing unit, receives the processing result and notifies the first device of the processing result as an inquiry result via the communicating unit, and

the selected inquiry processing unit includes:

(1) a detection processing unit which detects the second device on a network which is capable of being inquired by use of an inquiry protocol of the second device in advance or when an inquiry is received,

(2) a searching unit which: (a) acquires content information held in the second device detected by the detection processing unit based on the inquiry protocol of the second device, (b) converts the content information into a standardized form and (c) holds the converted content information, and

(3) the selected inquiry processing unit retrieves the converted content information acquired by and held in the searching unit according to the inquiry and a property of the second device and returns a result which satisfies a condition to the inquiry receiving unit as an inquiry response.

14.   (Currently Amended)   The content information management apparatus according to ~~claim13~~ claim 13, wherein the inquiry processing unit acquires an inquiry result by making an inquiry with respect to the second device detected by the device detection processing unit based on the inquiry protocol of the second device.

15.   (Original)   A content information management method applied to a content information management apparatus in which a plurality of devices using different protocols are connected via networks, comprising:

receiving from an arbitrary one of the plurality of devices an inquiry relating to content information held in another one of the plurality of devices;

acquiring content information items held in the plurality of devices based on inquiry protocols of the respective devices,

converting the content information items into a standardized form,

storing the converted content information,

retrieving the converted content information according to the received inquiry;

acquiring a result among the converted content information; and

transmitting the acquired result to the arbitrary one of the plurality of devices.

16.   (Original)   The content information management method according to claim 15, wherein acquiring the result includes acquiring an inquiry result by making an inquiry by use of an inquiry protocol of a targeted device via a network.

17.   (Original) The content information management method according to claim 15, wherein acquiring said result includes creating a reproduction list of contents held in each device in a standardized form based on the converted content information and returning the reproduction list as an inquiry response to the arbitrary one of the plurality of devices, when said arbitrary one of the plurality of devices issues a display request for a reproduction list of contents held in another ones of the plurality of devices.

18.   (Original) The content information management method according to claim 17, further comprising sequentially acquiring contents described in the reproduction list from the corresponding devices and output the acquired contents to the arbitrary one of the plurality of devices.

19.   (Original) A content information management method applied to a content information management apparatus in which a first device and at least one second device which holds content information being not accessible from the first device are connected via networks, comprising:
    receiving an inquiry relating to content information of the at least one second device from the first device via a communication medium,
    detecting the at least one second device on a network which is capable of being inquired by use of an inquiry protocol of the at least one second device in advance or when the inquiry is received,
    acquiring content information held in the detected at least one second device based on the inquiry protocol of the at least one second device, converting the acquired content information into a standardized form content information and storing the same, and
    retrieving the stored standardized content information according to the inquiry and a property of the second device and returning a result which satisfies a condition to the first device as an inquiry response.

20.   (Original) The content information management method according to claim 19, further including acquiring an inquiry result by making an inquiry with respect to the detected at least one second device based on the inquiry protocol of the at least one second device.

21.   (Currently Amended) A content information management apparatus comprising:

collection processing means for collecting content information items indicating attributes of contents stored in different specific forms in storage devices connected to networks using different protocols;

conversion processing means for converting each of the content information items collected by the collection processing means into content information of a standardized form; and

means for ~~displays~~ <u>outputting</u> the content information <u>of the standardized form</u> <u>converted by the conversion processing means</u>.

22.   (Currently Amended)   A content information management apparatus comprising:

a data processing unit operative under program control for:

(1) collecting content information items indicating attributes of contents stored in different specific forms in storage devices connected to networks using different protocols;

(2) converting each of the content information items collected by the collection processing unit into content information of a standardized form; and

<u>(3)</u> ~~a display coupled to said data processing unit for displaying~~ <u>outputting</u> the <u>converted</u> content information <u>of the standardized form</u>.